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Captain's Call



IAs Critical to War on Terrorism

During a visit to Camp McCrady, S.C., Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Mike Mullen made it clear that individual augmentee (IA) deployments will continue, and that they are critical to the Navy's efforts in the war on terrorism.

According to the CNO, IA deployments are a long-term commitment by the Navy to help take as much stress off the other services who are deploying more frequently.

The Navy currently has more than 10,000 Sailors in IA assignments all over the world.

Personnel officials estimate that nearly half of the 4,300 Sailors serving in Iraq are IA's. Mullen said he does not expect those figures to change dramatically in the next year or so.

Sailors bring unique perspectives and skills to the effort. Mullen also pointed out that IA duty can have a similar effect on the Sailors and the Navy by broadening their viewpoints and exposing them to new methods of war fighting.

The Navy has implemented new programs and incentives to improve the entire IA assignment process. The recently-established Task Force Individual Augmentation, for example, has increased notification time for Sailors ordered to IA billets from under 30 days to a high of 80 days. The notification window begins when a Sailor receives written orders of IA duty, and ends when that Sailor leaves the area of permanent duty station.

The Navy also announced late last year a series of IA incentives. These initiatives include flexible advancement exams and points towards advancement. The Navy will also pay relocation expenses for families of Sailors deployed on IA duty to move from their area of permanent duty station to an area of greater family support during the deployment. These initiatives are designed to ease the burden of the family and Sailor during the separation.

To learn more about IA duty visit www.npc.navy.mil.

